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EO 12958 3.3(b)(1) 257

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This document contains information referring to Projects:

OXCART

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20 December 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Carter

Attached is a copy of a draft Memorandum and statement prepared by Dr. Charyk for the Secretary of Defense. This was given to me this morning by Gilpatric with the understanding that the subject would be discussed upon Secretary McNamara's return after the first of the year.

The problem is that the OXCART, slightly modified, is needed by the Air Force as a reconnaissance plane, an interceptor, and possibly a bomber. Furthermore it provides the Air Force with a "new vehicle" badly needed in view of the SKYBOLT and B-70 argument.

I proposed to Gilpatric that CIA purchase the Air Force requirement. This, however, does not answer their political problem. I wish you would consider this matter carefully with interested people in the Agency so that we can discuss the subject on my return on the 26th. I have no doubt that the Killian Board will raise the question with me on the 27th or 28th.

JOHN A. McCONE
Director

Attachment

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: AUG 2007

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December , 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Surfacing the R-12

The purpose of this memorandum is to discuss three points about surfacing the R-12:

- (1) The need for a decision now to surface the R-12 in January;
- (2) How to surface the R-12; and
- (3) The impact on the security of the A-12.

(1) A decision now to surface the R-12 in January is required for the following reasons:

(a) Your decisions on the RS-70 and SKYBOLT will be taken by many members of the Congress as evidence that you are prejudiced and hold a doctrinaire position against manned strategic systems. This charge can not be effectively refuted simply by talking about the R-X. An effective defense against it will require, first, that you be able to point to the money included in the budget for the R-X (\$150 million), and second, that the R-X be given a central position in your statement to the Congress, and not merely inclusion as an afterthought. To do this, it will be necessary to surface the \$150 million.

(b) The "Black Budget" for FY 1964 has grown to be excessive. It is now approximately \$ million, accounted for approximately as follows:

R-X
Kedlock (IMI)
Sub-Total

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Surfacing the R-X and the Kedlock (interceptor) would reduce the total substantially.

(2) How to surface the R-X.

Our many discussions on this problem have led us to the conclusion that the best approach to surfacing the R-X and the Kedlock would be along the following lines. The basic aircraft should be described as an experimental plane, like the X-15, designed and built to test various advanced techniques. It should probably be designated the X-21. The excuse for keeping it such a secret should be that because of the very advanced technology involved, we wanted to keep the Soviet Union from learning about it until the last possible moment. (Of course, we kept the relevant committees of the Congress informed.) Now, however, the aircraft is about to fly, and complete secrecy is no longer possible. The story should indicate that the aircraft was developed with a variety of possible uses in mind including the R-X, an interceptor, and possibly as a recoverable first stage booster. It has been suggested that the latter application be kept as a fallback classified cover story, in line with our new policy of secrecy on satellite launchings. The defect in that is that the aircraft was obviously started before the secrecy policy.

A draft statement to the public (press and/or Congress) is attached for your consideration.

(3) Impact on security of A-12.

alied threat
(3) There is no possibility of keeping the existence of the OXCART program a secret forever. It is bound to come out. The only questions are when and how. Its existence is already apparently quite widely known in the aerospace industry. Moreover, the combination of a history of secrecy, Lockheed and Kelly Johnson, is bound to start rumors of a new U-2. Under the circumstances, trying to maintain the security of the A-12 by trying to keep the whole program a secret has a high probability of failure.

On the other hand, a strong case can be made for an approach to maintaining the security of the A-12 based on the following two points:

- (a) Surfacing the R-X and the Kedlock as a cover for the A-12;
and

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- (b) Taking maximum precautions to maintain the highest security on the low radar cross-section of the A-12.

Apparently the low radar cross section of the A-12 is quite a remarkable technical accomplishment. Moreover, mere visual observation (or photographs) would not reveal it. There is good reason to believe that it can be kept secret from the Russians. Surfacing the R-X and the Kedlock would help this. The Kedlock doesn't have a low radar cross section. The R-X could doubtless be equipped with the equivalent of removable corner reflectors that would give it a high radar cross section in peacetime, and permit a low radar cross section in wartime. (We might even fly one where Communist radars can get a look at it just to establish the high cross section in their minds.) All this is of course important because it is the low radar cross section that makes the A-12 so promising for covert operations. It is very important to keep the radar cross-section secret in order to prevent the Russians from taking countermeasures.

Enclosure

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PROPOSED DRAFT STATEMENT ON THE R-X

The schedule proposed by the Air Force for the procurement and deployment of the R-X would obviously be impossible of accomplishment if substantial progress in development of the aircraft had not already been made. It can now be revealed that the proposed R-X is to be developed as an outgrowth of the X-21, a secret experimental aircraft of very high performance and advanced technical concept.

The X-21 program was started in mid-1959 as the result of a proposal by Lockheed that was notable for its advanced technical concepts. Coupled with this was Lockheed's unique management proposal which indicated the job could be done within a significantly shorter period of time than is generally considered acceptable and with the resultant savings in dollars. There were in this proposal several items of not only proprietary interest to LAC but of far reaching consequences to the defense posture of the United States, and it was therefore decided that any future steps taken in relation to this program would be on an extremely classified need to know basis.

Inasmuch as the structure and design of the proposal presented an entirely new approach and also appeared to have possibilities as an LRI (Long Range Interceptor) as well as considerable potential for a post strike reccy or reccy strike vehicle, it was decided to exploit these possibilities and to go ahead in early 1960 with a prototype program in the simplest configuration.

This also motivated the decision to continue the work on the ASG-18/GAR-9 fire control and weapon system originally slated for the now cancelled F-108.

Due primarily to the Lockheed management approach plus special contractual procedures and commitments within the Air Force, this vehicle is well ahead of what normally could be considered an accelerated schedule.

In March of 1961 the program was reviewed by the present administration and the decision was made to continue under the same ground rules. Its post strike reccy and reccy strike capabilities were recently given major consideration due to the uncertainties surrounding the B-70.

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The Air Force for the first time in its history now finds itself in the singular position of having a vehicle whose basic design readily lends itself to a diversity of purpose with only the most minor of modifications and little change in performance.

Taking advantage of this diversity the Secretary of Defense has decided that one of the major applications of the X-21 will be in the role of a post-strike reconnaissance vehicle. In this role, the aircraft, now designated the R-X, will have a refueled range comparable to the RS-70, greater speed and altitude, and a smaller, but adequate, payload. Its development and procurement costs will be a small fraction of those for the RS-70. Because of the fact that many of the technical components necessary for recce strike are still beyond the current state of the art, it is not possible to commit to a recce strike system at this time. At first the R-X will be designed simply as a post-strike reconnaissance aircraft. This is an important role for future manned strategic aircraft, and is required to give us a desirable strategic flexibility. However, research and development on recce strike technology will continue, and, if and when the required technology becomes available, the R-X aircraft might be configured to have a secondary bombing or reconnaissance-strike capability if either proves to be required.

It is anticipated that system testing of the X-21 will be done at Edwards Air Force Base commencing not before late Spring of 1963.

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